(c) whether Government are aware that remifications of reorganization would be very harsh on the health of the consumers when the adulteration will have a free run; and

(d) if so, the action plan of Government to dispel such apprehensions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Staff Inspection Unit of the Department of Expenditure has, after conducting work measurement, study, recommended for the closure of 13 AGMARK Laboratories of Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture.

(b) Regional Agmark Laboratory, Bhubaneswar, is one of the laboratories which has been recommended for closure by the Staff Inspection Unit. After closure of this laboratory, its staff would be adjusted in the nearest laboratories/offices of the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection.

(c) The responsibility for checking food adulteration lies with the State Government under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954. The work of supervising grading work of AGMARK Laboratory at Bhubaneswar will, after its closure, be looked after by Kolkata Laboratory. There would, thus, be no adverse consequences by the closure of the AGMARK Laboratory at Bhubaneswar.

(d) Does not arise.

**NCF Recommendation on Credit Reforms in Farm Sector**

298. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission on Farmers has called for credit reforms in the farm sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has also suggested to reduce the interest rate on farm credit, if so, the details thereof; and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The National Commission on Farmers in its Scond Interim Report submitted

to the Government recently has, *inter-alia*, recommended the following measures:

* Initiate a paradigm shift from Micro-finance to Livelihood Finance;
* Debt survey to take into account newer forms of credit and indebtedness and newer forms of bondage;
* Decide on cut-off for Debt waiver in consultation with Panchayats and farmers' representatives in the distress hotspot areas; and
* Examine revival of lapsed insurance policies.

(c) and (d) The Commission has recommended reduction in the rate of interest for crop loans to 4% simple, with Government support, instead of compound rate of interest for arrears.

It is the constant endeavour of the Government to bring down rate of interest on agricultural loans. In line with this policy, the public sector banks have been advised to reduce their lending rate for the agriculture sector to a single digit not exceeding 9% per annum on crop loans upto a ceiling of Rs. 50, 000.

**NCF Recommendation on debt Survey**

299. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission on Farmers headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has recommended that the all India debt survey should be undertaken, taken into account newer forms of credit and indebtedness and newer forms of bondage; and

(b) whether Government have taken any decision to implement the recommendation in a time bound framework?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Commission made this recommendation in its Second Interim Report submitted to the Government recently. The consultation process has begun for firming up the Government's decision in the matter.